

Queer Studies House

A proposal by:

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Foreword

“Even though a campus may become more diverse in terms of the numbers of underrepresented groups present, the level of engagement can still be inconsequential if those representing different viewpoints are not encouraged and supported to express them. If an institution is not prepared to make space, figuratively speaking, for previously excluded groups, and support their presence on campus, its diversity efforts cannot succeed.”

-- President Liebowitz

Queer Studies House Proposal

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Submitted by
Christine Bachman, Ryan Tauriainen, and Molli Freeman-Lynde

MISSION

The Queer Studies House will provide a space for students with demonstrated academic interest in Queer Studies to develop and expand their awareness as well as bolster the visibility of the academic field and the queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender students within the College community. In addition, the Queer Studies House will strengthen our curricular commitment to diversity, serve to educate the campus about issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity, and provide a safe space for any student struggling with these issues.

VISION

We envision an academic interest Queer Studies House that has a visible presence on campus, and serves as a central location for academic research, discussion and action surrounding issues of gender and sexuality. This Queer Studies House, as a gender-neutral space, will acknowledge the spectrum of sexual and gender identities already present on campus, and help to assuage the problematic nature of Middlebury College's current housing policy for all students.

We envision a Queer Studies House that affirms Middlebury's commitment to diversity and nondiscrimination. The House will attract gifted students and faculty seeking an academic institution that celebrates all facets of diversity, particularly those pertaining to sexuality.

We envision a Queer Studies House that credits Middlebury College with taking a bold stance in promoting the academic pursuit of queer issues, and supporting its students of all sexual and gender identities. The current trends in Vermont legislation are making the state more hospitable to transgender-identified people—a reality that must extend to

Middlebury's campus as well, attracting students of all gender identities. Middlebury College will stand with other institutions across the country that have already established similar spaces, such as Bucknell College, Carleton College, Colgate College, Tufts University, University of Vermont, and Wesleyan College. Our peer liberal arts colleges and research universities have adopted a range of residential options to accommodate student interest in queer studies, as you will see in our supplementary materials. Our model works best within the Middlebury campus, supplementing other academic interest houses and at the same time positioning us as a role model for schools wrestling with hate crimes and discrimination based on sexual and gender identity.

THE HOUSE

The Queer Studies House will house four to eight students of any sexual orientation and/or gender identity, who have demonstrated an academic interest in queer studies. This academic interest will be assessed based on the courses taken, leadership activities undertaken, or research interests to be explored in senior work. The Queer Studies House, which will be made available to students beginning in Fall 2008, will be entirely gender-neutral, ensuring that all space is open to students of any gender identity. In addition to residential space, the House will have a small meeting space for any group relating to Queer Studies and issues (for example, Middlebury Open Queer Alliance, Gay Lesbian Employees at Middlebury, Middlebury Gay and Lesbian Alumni) as well as offer a venue for speakers and events. To emphasize the academic interest aspect of the House, our chief faculty advisor will be Sujata Moorti, Chair of the Program in Women and Gender Studies; the House will also have a broad-based, interdisciplinary faculty advisory board enabling the active participation and mentorship of faculty in any department who specialize in Queer Studies. In addition, the Queer Studies House will host bimonthly academic forums with the guidance of the Office for Institutional Diversity and the Program in Women and Gender Studies to contribute to and encourage discussion within the College community (See Sample Calendar for Programming).

WHY

The following are among the many reasons why the immediate establishment of the Queer Studies House is necessary.

- Academic Interest—As demonstrated by student enrollments in courses that address queer theory, such as the Sociology of Heterosexuality, faculty scholarship, increased student participation in lectures and events emerging from queer studies, and senior work conducted by students across disciplines (see supplementary data), Queer Studies is already an important part of academic life at Middlebury that must be expanded upon. Currently, Queer Studies is rooted in the Program in Women and Gender Studies, which has developed a track in sexualities and queer studies (See document “Academic Interest”).
- Chellis House— Chellis House serves primarily as a resource center for women, which has thus far been a surrogate home for students interested in issues pertaining to sexual and gender identities. Although Chellis House is trying to expand its purview to address issues from a gendered standpoint, the academic pursuit of issues relating to queer identity require a different infrastructure and support system. As an academic interest-based house, the Queer Studies House fulfills a need that Chellis House is not designed (nor should it be expected) to fill. As Middlebury works towards becoming an inclusive campus, it is crucial to *expand* upon available space dedicated to issues of diversity, rather than attempt to confine all “Othered” communities to one designated space.
- Academic Interest Houses—There is already a precedent for academic interest houses on campus, such as language houses, Weybridge and PALANA. The Queer Studies House—rooted in the Program in Women and Gender Studies—should be granted the same treatment as these houses.
- Residential Status—The residential aspect of the Queer Studies House is integral to its mission. In addition to the precedent already set, which allows for the existence of academic interest houses, the Queer Studies House requires residential status to ensure that it is an open and supportive place for all students at *any* time. Because the Queer Studies House is based on academic interest

rather than identity, it will provide the opportunity for a broad range of individuals to come together due to their shared commitment to Queer Studies. When students sharing an academic interest live together, as evidenced in PALANA and Weybridge, they contribute to increased education and programming in their respective fields through their combined energy and commitment; so too will the residential aspect of the Queer Studies House allow for increased programming. Finally, the Queer Studies House, as a gender neutral residence, will be the first space that acknowledges transgender identities; therefore, it is imperative that the house be granted residential status.

- Community Outreach and Support—The Queer Studies House will provide a safe space for students of any sexual orientation or gender identity who feel uncomfortable or unsafe on campus due to friction or harassment as a result of sexual or gender identity. Even for non-residents, the Queer Studies House will be an alternative space in which to study or find support. Rather than cloister or segregate members of the queer community, the Queer Studies House will involve itself in the broader community and encourage an atmosphere of respect and safety throughout the campus.
- Positive Response to Homophobia on Campus—In light of recent (and past) incidents of homophobia on this campus, the establishment of a Queer Studies House is a powerful signal reaffirming the College's stance against discrimination. The permanence of the Queer Studies House is crucial to the recognition and validation of the queer community and of interest in Queer Studies. In addition to the physical presence of the Queer Studies House on campus, the research and academic-based forums supported by the House will contribute to greater visibility of queer issues at Middlebury College.

Logistics

1. Why do you want to reside in a facility with an academic focus on Queer Studies?
2. Please explain how your leadership activities and academic interests support the mission of the Queer Studies House.
3. If selected, how would you share your unique qualities with other residents to the Queer Studies House?
4. What course(s) have you taken (or will have taken in the future) that relate to Queer Studies? What faculty member(s) have you worked with to further your academic interest in this area?

5. Please list events and programs which you have led or participated in that you believe helped to further your commitment and understanding of queer issues on campus.
6. Please list any campus activities and organizations in which you participate. Also list any leadership roles you have held, if applicable.
7. As a resident of the Queer Studies House, how would you ensure that the events and programs planned will be relevant to the general Middlebury Community? List some ideas for events or programs you might have.
8. What would you do in order to ensure that the Queer Studies House is a “safe place” for all students and welcoming of students of all sexual orientations and gender identities?

Residential Agreement/Expectations

- Tolerance and respect for ALL.
- Attend all House Meetings. Your attendance is required.
- Reside in the Queer Studies Academic Interest House during fall and spring of the academic year.
- Participate in house programs. You must take a leadership role in at least two major/important events sponsored by the Queer Studies House.
- Treat the House and its property, residence, staff, and guests with consideration and respect.
- Maintain an active and serious academic commitment to Queer Studies and GLBT awareness.
- Assume leadership roles and positions of responsibility and authority within the residential component of the House. Roles may include, but are not limited to: Liaisons to the Commons, Intra-House Communications, Community Service Officer, or Events Coordinator.

Queer Studies

Women's Studies emerges from the second wave women's movement of the 1970s. It is based on the premise that in a patriarchal society women's experiences are radically different from those of men. In the US the "mainstream" women's movement has primarily worked to ensure women's equal representation in the public sphere. Women's studies as a discipline has been inspired by this movement and primarily addresses the manner in which women's contributions to knowledge production have been marginalized. The discipline also produces empirical data documenting the processes through which women's public inequalities have been effected. Thus, women's studies courses may help us understand, as Virginia Woolf phrases it, why we don't know about Shakespeare's sister; or why women encounter a glass ceiling in the work place, or why a wage gap continues to exist or the role women play in the political arena.

If Women's Studies is primarily an identity-based movement, with the third wave women's movement the focus shifted to issues. Rather than focus on women's exclusions or oppressions gender studies starts to ask questions about what is woman; it specifically destabilizes foundational terms of women's studies. Queer theory is an outgrowth of this line of inquiry and is primarily identified as emerging in the 1990s, building on ideas from Foucault and Derrida, and in particular Judith Butler's book Gender Trouble. Queer Studies shares intellectual roots with feminism and gay/lesbian studies but occupies an eccentric location to these theories.

Queer theory is a set of ideas based around the idea that identities are not fixed and do not determine who we are. It suggests that it is meaningless to talk in general about 'women' or any other group; instead it challenges and contests binaries. It proposes that we deliberately challenge all notions of fixed identity, in varied and non-predictable ways. While Women's Studies grows out of the broad-based women's movement, queer studies emerges from queer activism in gay and lesbian communities, such as ACT UP!

Queer Theory, however, is not another name for Gay and Lesbian Studies. They are different but related. Queer theory is an outgrowth of feminist studies but challenges foundational assumptions of women's studies, such as the category woman. Queer theory is akin to gay and lesbian studies in that it questions "natural" and "unnatural" behaviors/categories, but it goes beyond the gay/straight binary. Queer studies is not limited to issues of sexuality or other identity categories rather it interrogates normative and deviant categories.

For more information see: www.theory.org.uk/ctr-quee.htm

Academic Interest

The study of gender and sexuality in the academy at large and at Middlebury College in specific has undergone significant changes throughout the late 20th century and into the 21st century. With the establishment of the first Women's Studies Program in 1970 at San Diego State College gender entered the academic curriculum as a distinct area of study. Initially, women's studies classes, like the 1970s women's movement, focused on issues of marginalization, under-representation, and the specific mechanisms through which women's contributions to knowledge production have been devalued. Thus, courses help us understand, as Virginia Woolf phrases it, why we don't know about Shakespeare's sister; or why women encounter a glass ceiling in the work place, or why a wage gap continues to exist or the role women play in the political arena.

The interdisciplinary nature of Women's Studies with its fundamental grounding in issues pertaining to women's participation in the public arena gradually became more complicated as women of color and lesbians pointed out the blind spots constitutive of seventies feminism. These interventions allowed for a theorizing of gender that ultimately led to either a change within Women's Studies programs or a separate establishment of programs concerned with gender. In general, if a separate gender studies program was established women's studies retained its focus on women. If however, as was the case at Middlebury College in the late 1990s, the academic community decided that a broader approach to gender was preferable and in fact theoretically more sound Women's Studies programs morphed into Women and Gender Studies programs or simply Gender Studies. These programs not only were able to address the intersections of race and sexuality with gender but also moved beyond to call into question the validity of the term woman or feminine; they set the ground for a move outside of identity-based knowledge formations to issue-based ones. Primarily this means that while gay and lesbian issues were addressed under the rubric of women and gender studies, the growing field of queer studies destabilized these categories. Binaries were not longer the foundational categories, rather gender studies contested and interrogated binaries, particularly those pertaining to sex and sexuality.

The term queer studies is often attributed to Teresa de Lauretis but the body of work that has comprises queer theory is informed by the scholarship of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler's influential book Gender Trouble. The clear and neat separation of gender and sexuality was no longer possible and scholars started focusing on the aspect of performativity in gender, sex, and sexuality. "Power" became the central axiom for investigations into these aspects of the human experience.

In short, we have witnessed a shift in the focus of academic scholarship pertaining to issues of human gender and sexuality starting from women's issues, then broadening to gender issues, and finally investigating questions of sexualities and gender expression.

These shifts have been accompanied by the establishment of respective academic disciplines and departments.

Since issues pertaining to gender and sexualities are highly contentious and deeply connected to questions of personal identity and one's place in society it is not surprising that alongside the establishment of these various departments and programs we saw the creation of academic interest houses where students could discuss, reflect, and live new insights in a safe space. Initially these houses granted women the option of being able to freely theorize and practice feminist insights apart from a potentially harmful environment of male supremacy. With the shift toward issues of sexualities queer students have been searching for these spaces since the 1990s, spaces where they can theorize and live their lives apart from a potentially harmful environment of heterosexist supremacy.

At Middlebury College, the 1998 External Review of the Program in Women and Gender Studies highlighted the curricular gap in queer theory and in the examination of diverse sexualities. Subsequently, the Program in Women and Gender Studies has started to offer courses where issues central to queer theory have been addressed. With her appointment as director of the Program in Women and Gender Studies, Sujata Moorti recommended the development of three focused tracks within the major: race and ethnicity; sexualities and queer studies; and transnational issues. Currently, there are enough courses being offered in the sexualities and queer studies track and those pertaining to transnational issues to make these foci viable for WAGS majors. We are working to build the range and diversity of courses offered in each of these tracks. As the attached document notes, we have over a dozen courses that are offered on a regular basis where faculty address queer issues. As student interest in these issues develop faculty will no doubt offer more courses and expand the range of issues and concerns that are addressed. The following faculty have already offered courses pertaining to queer studies or have expressed an interest in developing new courses: Laurie Essig (SOAN), Roman Graf (German), Kevin Moss (Russian), Sujata Moorti (WGS), William Poulin-Deltour (French) and Catharine Wright. In addition, developing the Queer Studies House will also encourage the College to offer more winter-term courses on this topic.

For Middlebury College this means that academically the Women and Gender Studies Program needs to reflect on its stand vis-à-vis a program focusing on the Study of Sexualities. We can either change the outlook and the name of our current Women and Gender Studies program or establish a program in the Study of Sexualities. We have faculty members that are capable and willing to contribute to a program in sexuality studies. Laurie Essig (SOAN), Roman Graf (German), Kevin Moss (Russian), Sujata Moorti (WGS), William Poulin-Deltour (French) come to mind immediately, but there are others that would be thrilled to participate in such a venture.

Discussions pertaining to Carr Hall and its status as a center for diversity are currently focusing on race and ethnicity and their intersection with issues of gender, sexuality,

socio-economics, etc., thus not foregrounding sexualities. Chellis House is a center for Women's Studies narrowly conceived. It is a model from the 1970s that did not get established at Middlebury College until the early 1990s. This attests to the College's hesitant approach to issues pertaining to gender and sexuality and frankly diversity in general. We become outdated by the time we finally act! This is not to say that we should follow every trend, but once an academic discipline has become established and has the support of the faculty we need to advance.

The creation of a Queer Studies House will facilitate the discussions on campus around issues of sexuality and the potential establishment of a program in the study of sexualities and gender expression. The insights gained in gender studies, gay and lesbian studies, and queer theory from the 1990s will finally find their acknowledgement and public representation in a student-centered Queer Studies House and Middlebury College will have moved into the 21st century.

Compiled by Roman Graf, Professor, German Department and Sujata Moorti, Director,
Program in Women and Gender Studies

Sample Year of Programming

Fall Semester:

September

Back to the Basics: A workshop on sexual orientation during freshmen orientation in collaboration with Deliberative Dialogue.

Queer Studies 101: A welcome event for the entire community. Come with an open mind and curiosity about one of the newest academic disciplines on campus. Learn about Queer theory, meet faculty experts, and share research ideas.

October

Come Out, Come Out Wherever You Are!: Collaborate with Middlebury Open Queer Alliance for National Coming Out Day. Come for a film screening of *Boys Don't Cry* followed by a discussion with students, faculty, and staff.

Sexual Assault and Gender Identities: Collaborate with Feminist Action at Middlebury and Women's Safe during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Attend a QSH workshop and presentation that explores how sexual assault is experienced and/or perceived by people of different gender identities.

November

Queering the Globe: A collaboration with the International Student Organization. How do binary constructions (male/female, pure/impure, etc.) function in different nations and/or cultures? These questions will be asked within a faculty lecture by Sujata Moorti.

Translating Gender Identities: Transgender, Transsexual, Transvestite: Kate Bornstein, author of *Gender Outlaw*, lectures on "gender-queer" and "trans" identities. Do trans identities transgress the gender and sex binary or do they reinforce the divide?

December

World AIDS Day: Collaborate with the Global AIDS Campaign. How does queer theory relate to contemporary issues of social justice and activism in HIV+ communities?

Human Rights Day: Queer Studies—just for gay and lesbian people? What role does Queer Studies play in conversations about human rights in general? Faculty lecture by Kevin Moss or Roman Graf.

Spring Semester:

February

Feb“queer”ary Orientation: A workshop on different queer identities in honor of the incoming Feb class done in collaboration with Middialogue.

Queering the Color Line: A panel discussion for Black History Month in collaboration with the African American Alliance and Women of Color: in what ways does queerness affect people of color? Is there a propensity to accept queer people within these historically slighted groups or does the discrimination run deeper?

March

Queer Women in History: A presentation in collaboration with Chellis House and Feminist Action at Middlebury on the contributions of queer women in history in honor of Women's History Month. A special presentation by Karin Hanta.

Queer People in the Arts: A special performance by Vermont singer/songwriter Gregory Douglass. An openly-gay performer, Gregory plays a very active role in the LGBTQA community, and can attest to the special challenges queer people face in the entertainment business.

April

Undergraduate Research Seminar: How does one study and research Queer Theory? What materials and people are available for this subject? What areas of Queer Studies are in high demand for more research? This seminar put on by the Womens and Gender Studies department will address all these questions and provide guidance for research in the rich field of Queer Theory.

Gaypril Drag Ball: In combination with MOQA, the Queer Studies House will help host the annual Drag Ball, while also promoting education on trans identities and providing a detailed explanation on the differences between the transgendered and transvestites.

May

Student Thesis Presentations: Seniors whose thesis or senior work is rooted in Queer Studies or Queer Theory will be invited to present their research to the entire community. This event will be both educational for students, and provide seniors with added practice on presenting their theses.

Faculty Teaching Queer Issues

Laurie Essig
Roman Graf
Sujata Moorti
Kevin Moss
William Poulin-Deltour
Catharine Wright

Courses where at least 50% of materials address gender:

1. SOAN 0191 – Sociology of Gender
2. WAGS 0200 – Foundation in Women and Gender Studies
3. WAGS 0223 – Introduction to Gay and Lesbian Studies
4. AMST 0230 – Gender Images in American Popular Culture
5. JAPN 0250 – Gender in Japan
6. RUSS 0255 – Gender and Sexuality in Russian Culture
7. PSYC 0307 – Human Sexuality
8. SOAN 0314 – Sociology of Heterosexuality
9. FREN 0349 – Sex and Gender: The French Paradox
10. WAGS 0372 – Gender and the South Asian Diaspora
11. WAGS 0400 – Women and Gender
12. WAGS 0421 – Readings in African History: Women and Gender in Africa

CHELLIS HOUSE

- A women's resource center that is expanding its focus to address other issues pertaining to gender and sexuality. The 1989 Task Force on the Status of Women defines it as "a permanent place for meetings of women's groups." The 1997 Task Force on the Status of Women describes Chellis House as a site for the discussion of women's issues and the Resource Center as a space for women faculty, students, staff and alumni.
- Serves as a meeting site for various student groups: Feminist Action at Middlebury, Women of Color, Middlebury Open and Queer Alliance, Women and Global Peace
- Helps coordinate community outreach efforts with students such as Elm Street Initiative and Sister-to-Sister
- Organizes events for:
 - Women's History Month
 - 16 Days of Activism to End Gender Violence
 - Sexual Assault Awareness Month
 - Eating Disorders Awareness Week
 - Gaypril
 - Black History Month
 - Women's Health Issues
 - A range of issues pertinent to women faculty and staff, such as child care, women's health.
- Facilitate presentations of student research and feminist faculty research

QUEER STUDIES HOUSE

- An academic interest house where 4-8 students demonstrating a commitment to queer studies in the classroom and/or campus-wide activities can reside. The house aims to offer an environment where students with shared interests can help foster dialog and discussion on campus.
- This is not an identity-based house but involves students who are interested in a particular issue, examination of queer issues.
- Conduct gender identity workshops open to all students and staff. These workshops will be designed to clarify the focus of queer studies and to foster dialog and discussion.
- Sponsor film screenings which will help raise consciousness and visibility of queer issues on campus.
- Coordinate student participation in annual regional, national and international workshops and conferences, such as:
 - Middlebury Undergraduate Research Symposium
 - Translating Identity Conference in Burlington VT.
 - CREA: Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute, New York
 - Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights: LGBT and Human Rights International Training Program
- Facilitate dialogs with faculty in an effort to bring queer theory and issues to classrooms in various disciplines.

INTERESTED STUDENTS

John Allen '11

Christine Bachman '09.5

Nick Ballen '09

Kevin Broussard '11

Samantha Collier '09

Alex Eppler '10.5

Angelika Ferguson '09

Chelsea Guster '11

James Hexter '11

Jean Lin '10

Loren Mejia '09

Christian Morel '11

Heath Rassner '11

Ian Sanders-Flemming '09.5

Lance Sun '11

Matt Sunderland '11

Fengxue Zhu '11

FACULTY AND STAFF IN FAVOR

Katy Abbott, Associate Dean of the College/Ross Commons Head
Steve Abbott, Associate Professor of Mathematics/Ross Commons Head
Scott Barnicle, Dean of Atwater Commons
Matt Carluzzo, Dean of Cook Commons*
Janine Clookey, Dean of Ross Commons
Roman Graf, Professor of German
Heidi Grasswick, Associate Professor of Philosophy
Karen Guttentag, Associate Dean of the College*
Jyoti Daniere, Director of Health and Wellness Education
Emmie Donadio, Head of Atwater Commons
Stephen Donadio, Fulton Professor of Humanities/Head of Atwater Commons
Barbara Doyle-Wilch, Dean of Library and Information Services
Deb Evans, Wonnacott Commons Head
Eileen Fahey, Academic Coordinator for the Geology Department
Kathy Foley-Giorgio, Associate Dean and Director of ISSS
Larry Hamberlin, Assistant Professor of Music
Ann Hanson, Former Dean of Student Affairs
Karin Hanta, Director of Chellis House
Amy Hoffman, Senior Computing Specialist
Richard Jenkins, Assistant Catalogue Librarian
Jasmin Johnson, Special Assistant to the Dean of Diversity
Augustus Jordan, Associate Dean of the College*
Matthew Kimble, Assistant Professor of Psychology
Matt Longman, Dean of Wonnacott Commons
Gary Margolis, Executive Director of College Mental Health
Sujata Moorti, Chair and Professor of Women's and Gender Studies
Kevin Moss, Professor of Russian
Will Nash, Associate Professor of American Studies/Wonnacott Commons Head
Leroy Nesbit, Senior Advisor for Institutional Diversity
Matthew Pacholec, Dean of Brainerd Commons*
Shawn Rae Passalacqua, Assistant Director of Admissions
Erin Quinn, Director of Athletics*
Shirley Ramirez, Dean for Institutional Diversity
Carrie Rampp, Director of Resource Development
Marita Schine, Head of Brainerd Commons
Robert Schine, Professor of Jewish Studies/Head of Brainerd Commons
Yumna Siddiqi, Associate Professor of English
Lisa Terrier, Senior Technology Specialist
Hector Vila, Assistant Professor of Writing
Michael Warner, Manager of Copy Cataloguing
Joseph Watson, Preservation and Processing Manager
Susan Watson, Associate Professor of Physics
Patti Zupan, Professor of Italian/Head of Cook Commons
* Support was not specific to "Queer Studies House"

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS IN FAVOR

The Student Government Association (SGA)
Sponsored by Senator Anne Runkel

African American Alliance (AAA)
President Aifuwa Eihigator

Alianza Lationamericana y Caribeña (ALC)
President Bryan Pacheco

Feminist Action at Middlebury (FAM)
Co-Presidents Kolbe Franklin and Aaron Gensler

International Student Organization (ISO)
President Ria Shroff

Islamic Society
President Zohra Safi

Middlebury Asian Student Organization (MASO)
President Emily Goldsmith

Middlebury Open Queer Alliance
Co-Presidents Ryan Tauriainen and Christine Bachman

Korea Town (Korean Student Organization)
President Byung Kyu Park

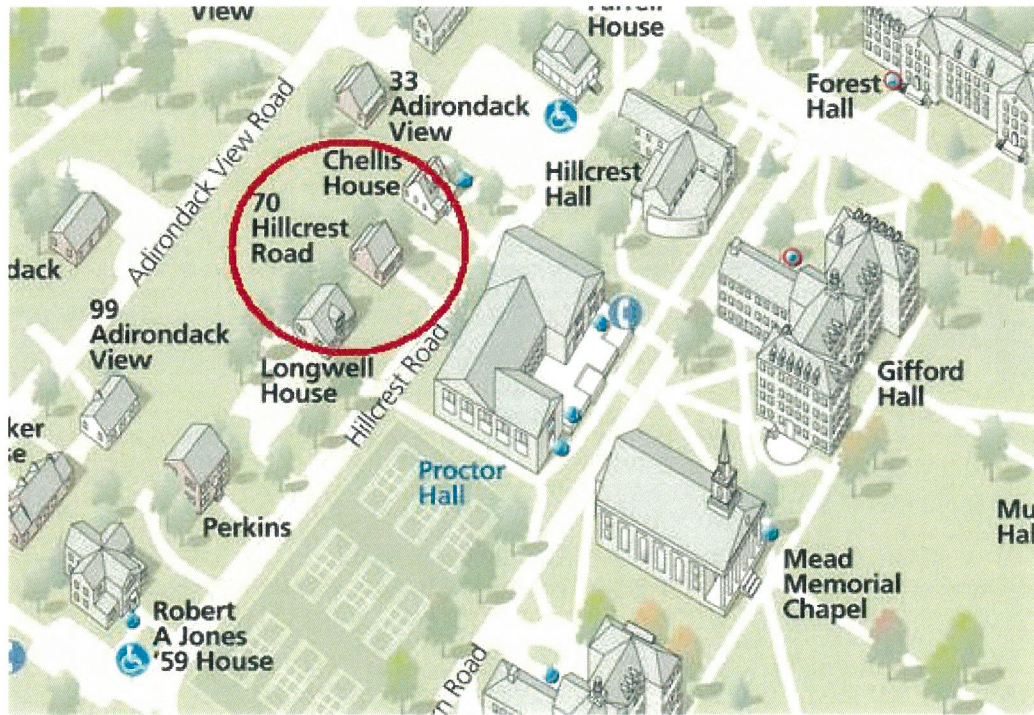
Russian and Eastern European Society (REES)
President Jin Cho

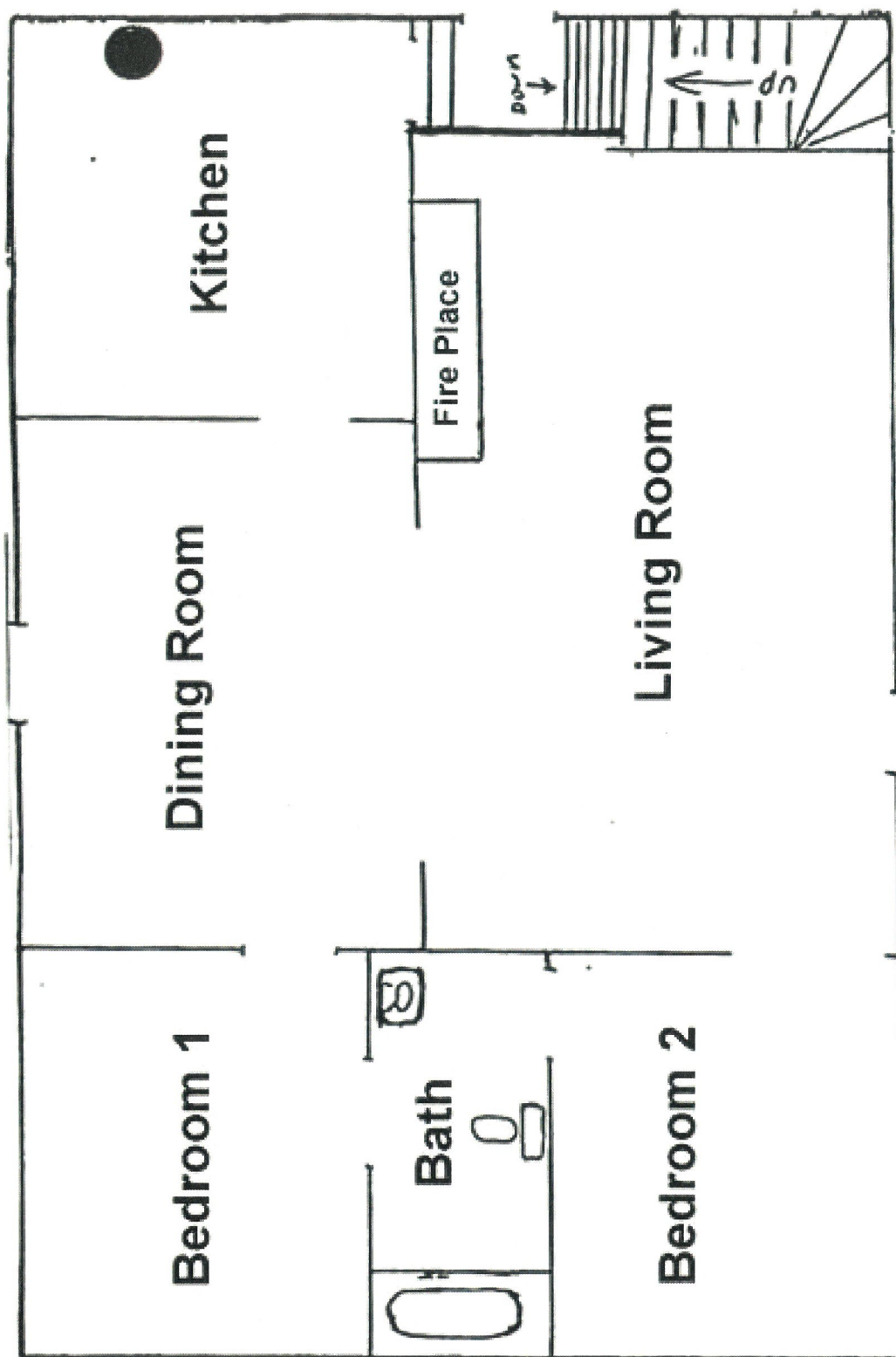
Unitarian Universalists of Middlebury (UUM)
Represented by Kelly Patton

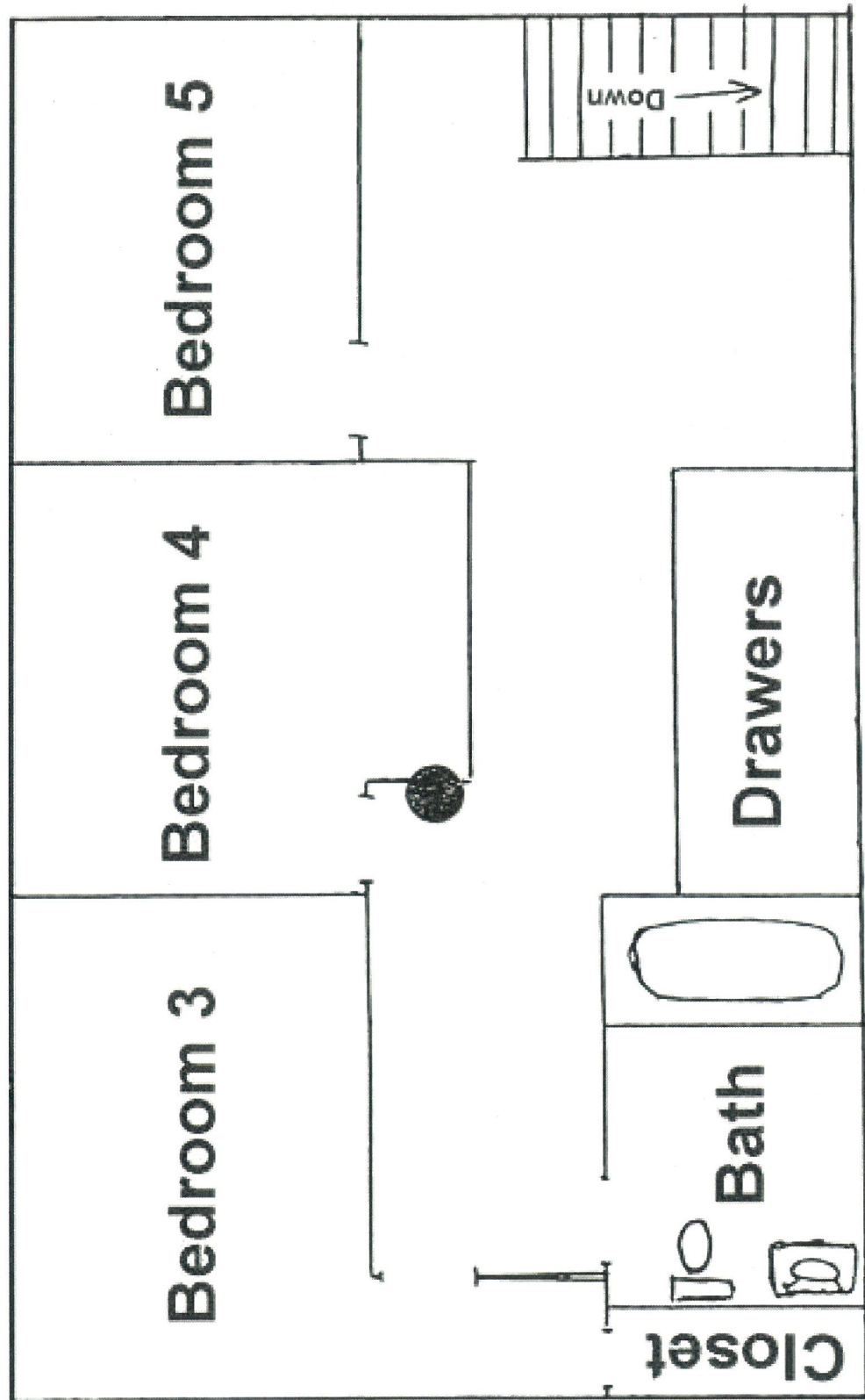
Voices of Indigenous People (VIP)
President Bobby Joe Smith

Women of Color (WOC)
Co-Presidents Morgane Richardson and Ethiopia Al-Mahdi

Possible Location: 70 Hillcrest Road







Colleges with Similar Houses

BUCKNELL COLLEGE

Safe House:

- When interest permits, Bucknell has a house titled “Safe House” specifically as an interest house for queer students and allies.

CARLETON COLLEGE

Housing:

- Carleton College has two different types of special houses: institutional houses and special interest houses. There are 8 houses specifically for “identities.”
- The Queer and Ally House was established as an institutional house in 2001: it does not need to reapply in order to stay in existence.
- Houses 8 students, including 1 house manager.
- House is responsible for planning several events a year for LGBT Awareness.
- There is an application and interview process in order to live in the house.
- There is currently a movement for Carleton College to be “gender neutral.”

COLGATE UNIVERSITY

Residence Life at Colgate:

- Colgate University offers opportunities for students to write proposals to live together in specially designated town-houses on campus. The students must submit what programming they would like to do as a community to be approved.
- There is current work in formally founding a “Queer House” at Colgate that would not have to reapply each year.
- Academic Interest and Special Interest houses are added and change at Colgate often. Some examples include: Creative Arts House, Asian Interest House, and the Harlem Renaissance House.
- Colgate is currently have hearings on becoming “gender neutral” and the housing policy is hoped to be changed before spring 2008.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Housing:

- Syracuse University has fraternities and sororities. One, Delta Lambda Phi, is a social house that specifically addresses issues facing gay students and is home to mostly queer identified students who lead activist activities for the gay community.

TUFTS UNIVERSITY

Rainbow House:

- LGBT and Allies House – founded in 2000
- Unit houses 10 students with demonstrated interest in LGBT Issues
- Not focused on identity, but on culture and education

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

Housing:

- The University of Vermont recognizes a transgender community by having housing options which are “gender neutral”. They also have special services for transitioning students and an easy process in which trans student may change their name on all records to reflect their true gender.
- UVM also has several Living-Learning suites in which students with interest in queer studies or identify as queer may live together. These spaces are gender neutral.

WESLEYAN COLLEGE

Open House:

- “Our House”, a special interest house for queer students, was proposed by several students in 1991. The house was fully operational, and housed 11 students, by fall of 1992.
- Later, the name was changed to “Open House” and the theme of the house was broadened to many facets of queer identity.
- Currently, the mission statement of Open House reads as such:
“Open House is a safe space for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Flexual, Asexual, Genderfuck, Polyamorous, Bondage/Disciple, Dominance/Submission, Sadism/Masochism (LGBTBTQQFAGPBDSM) communities and for people of sexually or gender dissident communities. The goals of Open House include generating interest in a celebration of queer life from the social to the political to the academic. Open House works to create a Wesleyan community that appreciates the variety and vivacity of gender, sex and sexuality.”

Closing Remarks

What emerged from our discussions of the homophobic incidents, at least thus far, is hardly what one might call neat and tidy. There was, however, much learned beginning with a far greater awareness of the bigotry that exists here as it does in society at-large, and that we have considerable work to do if we truly aspire to be a community that welcomes diversity and wishes to learn from it. We also witnessed how easy it can be for some members of an aggrieved group to fall into the same kind of stereotyping from which they themselves have suffered. Diversity sure can be messy.

-- President Liebowitz Baccalaureate Address 2007